

Emm. Mary Ann 19

ART-NEEDLEWORK

FOR

DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY:

A

GUIDE TO EMBROIDERY IN CREWELS,
SILKS, APPLIQUÉ, ETC.;

AND CONTAINING

*THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN AT THE ROYAL SCHOOL
FOR ART-NEEDLEWORK AT SOUTH
KENSINGTON, ENGLAND.*

EDITED BY

LUCRETIA P. HALE.



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1878.

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PREFACE.

IN making use of the valuable book on Art-Needlework, published in London by E. Masé, the American editors take occasion to make many additions.

Materials that can be bought here are suggested, and the descriptions of stitches are made more clear. In the History of Embroidery, some account of work in our country is given also. We believe the book will be of value to all desirous to perfect themselves in this work.

L. P. H.

Practical instructions in the art of embroidery have been rendered necessary by the revolution in needlework that has taken place during the last few years. Berlin-wools have been supplanted by crewels, and cross-stitch and tent-stitch are superseded by that used in the old tapestries.

The difficulty that is inseparable from what is new is added to in this case by the great difference in the mode of working. In Berlin-work each stitch has its model in the copy, and not a single original idea is required to have a place in the mind of the worker. In art-needlework, however, the copy gives only outlines; and these must be filled in and colored, not only by the worker's fingers, but by her mind. It is, in fact, "painting in

wools," and is as much more difficult than Berlin-work as it is superior in its results.

It is hoped that this little book will not only assist the novice to master the difficulties of the initiatory steps, but that it may also serve as a guide to the more advanced, as regards coloring, choice of material, and those minor matters of detail, which, taken as a whole, are of great importance to the effect of the work.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE publishers are indebted to Messrs. N. D. Whitney & Co., of Boston, for the use of the frames and implements which are figured in this book. The illustration of Penelope, next to p. 5, is one of a series of twenty of Flaxman's celebrated designs issued for decorators and art-students. (See advertisement on another page.) "The Age of Fable" alluded to in these pages is a volume giving the stories of the mythological characters which are brought into every kind of decoration: these stories are intensely interesting, besides giving a large amount of valuable information to decorators. "Greek Ornament" is Part I. of Tilton's "Hand-books of Decorative Form," illustrated with twelve plates printed in the original colors, edited by William R. Ware, Professor of Architecture in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. On p. 59 is a caution not to mix the style of one epoch or nationality with another. "Greek Ornament" gives the pure Greek forms.

The publishers of this book have in preparation other works on needlework, and will send circulars of the same to any who will send their address.

S. W. TILTON & Co., Boston.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE rapid sale of the first edition of this book shows that the purpose for which it was intended has been widely acknowledged. It has proved a valuable handbook for ornamental needle-work, not only in suggesting materials, but in describing the processes of the work which has awakened so deep an interest in every direction:

There is a wide-spread enthusiasm for Art-embroidery. Schools are established in the larger towns, and help from books is welcomed everywhere. The school at the Art Museum in Boston has met with gratifying success ; vacancies in the different classes are filled as soon as they appear, and there is a tasty and artistic atmosphere always in its attractive work-room. The rooms of the Decorative Art Society, too, show the advance in skill and taste in its contributors ; and the increasing number of visitors shows the same advance in the public outside. Many visit the room to get "ideas," and carry away suggestions for home-work ; while there are others more liberal, who are willing to pay for the skill and work of the contributors, and to give a solid help to the advance of decorative art.

In all this, there is, perhaps, too much eagerness to acquire all these advantages easily by the help of other people's brains. A request too often comes for some "recipe" by which designs can be put upon work by any novice who can afford to buy crewels and crash.

It should be remembered that this branch of decorative work is

called ART-needlework, and that art is always long. There is no short road to artistic needlework. To design a little pattern an inch and a half long for a tidy requires thought, as well as skill in art, and experience in work.

It must not be imagined that "conventional" work is in any way "easy" work. On the contrary, a skilled artist is needed to devise it, — one who has studied nature closely enough to learn what are the characteristic forms to be expressed.

The workwoman, however, who is willing to be a mere copyist will find always in the schools instruction in the mechanical use of needle and crewels and color, and plenty of designs to occupy her hours. And for her, as well as those who cannot attend the schools, we hope that this handbook will provide all that is needed for the first steps in art-needlework. Experience, and cultivated taste, and study of art in every direction, will be required, however, for further advance.

Much of this, indeed, is needed in adapting the designs of others. For this there are certain laws that should be held always in mind.

Keep always before your eyes the object and intention of your work, and ask yourself if the design that you propose will suit the material and the limits to which you must confine yourself.

A "conventional design" is one that is brought into artistic form, which must always bear some reference to the object for which it is used. It should be presented without perspective, without modelling, when used for a flat surface, so that it may not appear to project from the background; and the figures need not be brought together in apparently natural grouping, but should be subordinate to the form required.

A more naturalistic treatment allows, for decoration of certain objects, the use of a few shades; but even here the treatment should be as flat as possible.

No general rules, however, can pretend to cover a subject so wide. These are only the leading principles intended to invite study of a matter for which it is impossible to prepare a few prescriptions.

In the first edition some illustrations were given adapted from the English book, though they were not at the time considered perfectly satisfactory.

In the new edition these are to be withdrawn, and in their place will be given some designs, many of them original to this work, of a simple character, and easily transferred to work.

The publishers are at the same time issuing some valuable packages of designs, with introductory instructions.

They propose also to give a complete series of instruction in all the forms of needlework, including plain needlework, as well as point lace and the more ornamental branches.

L. P. H.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
STITCHES TAUGHT AT THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF ART NEEDLEWORK .	3
CHAPTER II.	
MATERIALS USED IN COLORED EMBROIDERY.	27
CHAPTER III.	
IMPLEMENTS	34
CHAPTER IV.	
METHOD	38
CHAPTER V.	
COLOR AND DESIGN IN ORNAMENTAL NEEDLEWORK	53

ART-NEEDLEWORK.

CHAPTER I.

STITCHES USED IN HAND EMBROIDERY AS TAUGHT AT THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF ART NEEDLEWORK.

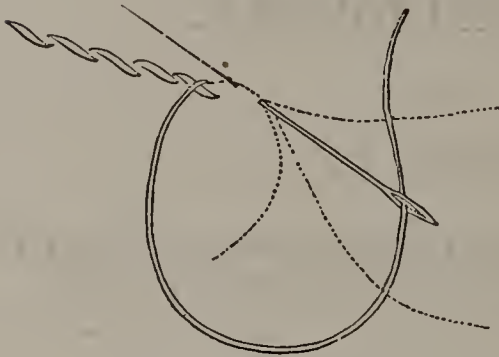
To avoid pulling or puckering the work, care should be taken, — firstly, that the needle is not too small, so as to require any force in drawing it through the material; secondly, the material must be held in a convex position over the fingers, so that the crewel or silk in the needle shall be looser than the ground; and, thirdly, not to use too long needlefuls. These rules apply generally to all hand-worked embroideries.

STITCHES.

Stem Stitch. — The first stitch which is taught to a beginner is “stem stitch” (wrongly called also, “crewel stitch,” as it has no claim to being used exclusively in crewel embroidery). It is most useful in work done in the hand, and especially in outlines of flowers, unshaded leaves and arabesque, and all conventional designs.

It may be best described as a long stitch forward on the surface, and a shorter one backward on the under side

of the fabric, the stitches following each other almost in line from left to right. The effect on the wrong side is exactly that of an irregular back-stitching used by dress-makers, as distinguished from regular stitching. A leaf

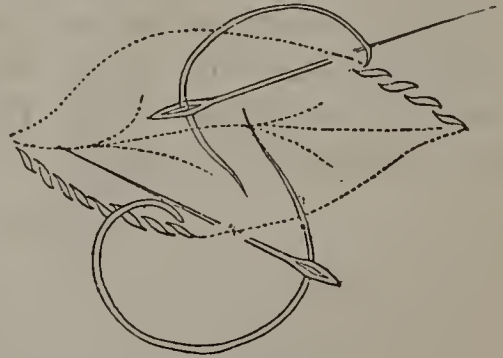


No. 1. — STEM STITCH.

worked in outline should be begun at the lower or stalk end, and worked round the right side to the top, taking care that the needle is to the left of the thread as it is drawn out. When the point of the leaf is reached, it is best to

reverse the operation in working down the left side towards the stalk again, so as to keep the needle to the right of the thread instead of to the left, as in going up.

The reason of this will be easily understood: we will suppose the leaf to have a slightly serrated edge (and there is no leaf in nature with an absolutely smooth one). It will be found, that, in order to give this ragged appearance, it is necessary to have the points at which the insertions of

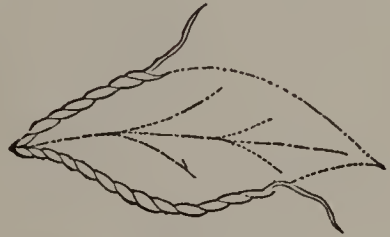


No. 2.

the needle occur on the outside of the leaf; whereas, if the stem stitch were continued down the left side exactly in the same manner as in ascending the right, we should have the ugly anomaly of a leaf outlined as in fig. 3.

If the leaf is to be worked "solidly," another row of

stem stitching must be taken up the centre of it (unless it be a very narrow leaf), to the top. The two halves of the leaf must then be filled in separately, with close, even rows of stem stitch, worked in the ordinary way, with the needle to the left of the thread.¹ This will prevent the ugly ridge which remains in the centre if it is worked round and round the inside of the outline. Stem stitch must be varied according to the work in hand. If a perfectly even line is required, care must be taken that the direction of the needle when inserted is in a straight line with the preceding stitch. If a slight serrature is required, each stitch must be sloped a little by inserting the needle at a slight angle, as shown in the illustration.



No. 3.

The length of the surface stitches must vary to suit the style of each piece of embroidery.

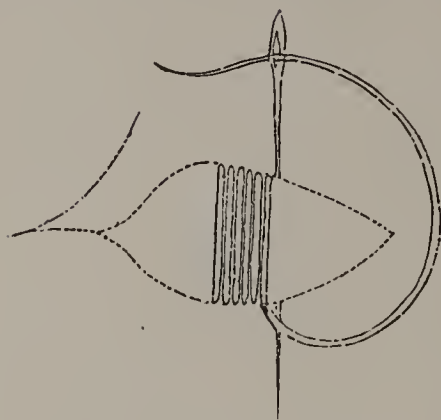
Split Stitch is worked like ordinary "stem," except that the needle is always brought up *through* the crewel or silk, which it splits, in passing.

The effect is to produce a more even line than is possible with the most careful stem stitch. It is used for delicate outlines. Split stitch is rarely used in hand embroidery, being more suitable for frame work, but has been described here as being a form of stem stitch. The effect is somewhat like a confused chain stitch.

Satin Stitch (*French Plumetis*) is one of those chiefly

¹ For most solid worked leaves, it is better not to take the outline first all the way up, but begin at the middle rib, and work out on the under outline, first to first point on the edge of the leaf, then carry the thread back to the midrib, working out to the edge, merging the stitches in "Irregular Stem," as described under the head of Feather Stitch. — *Am. Editor.*

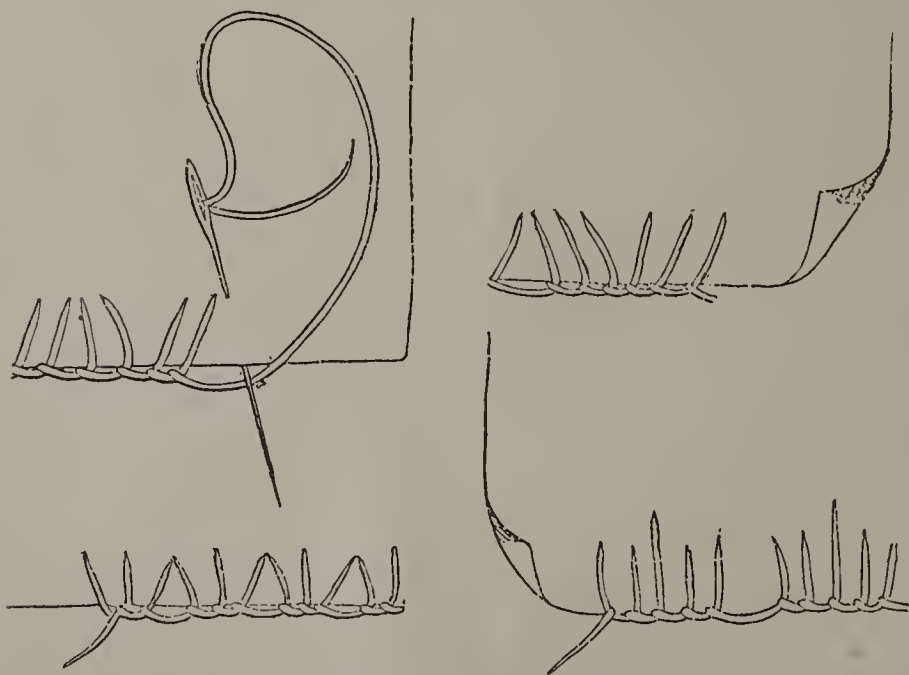
used in white embroidery, and consists in taking the needle each time back again almost to the spot from which



No. 4. — SATIN STITCH.

it started, so that the same amount of crewel or silk remains on the back of the work as on the front. This produces a surface as smooth as satin: hence its name. It is chiefly used in working the petals of small flowers, such as "forget-me-nots," and in arabesque designs where a raised effect is wanted in small masses.

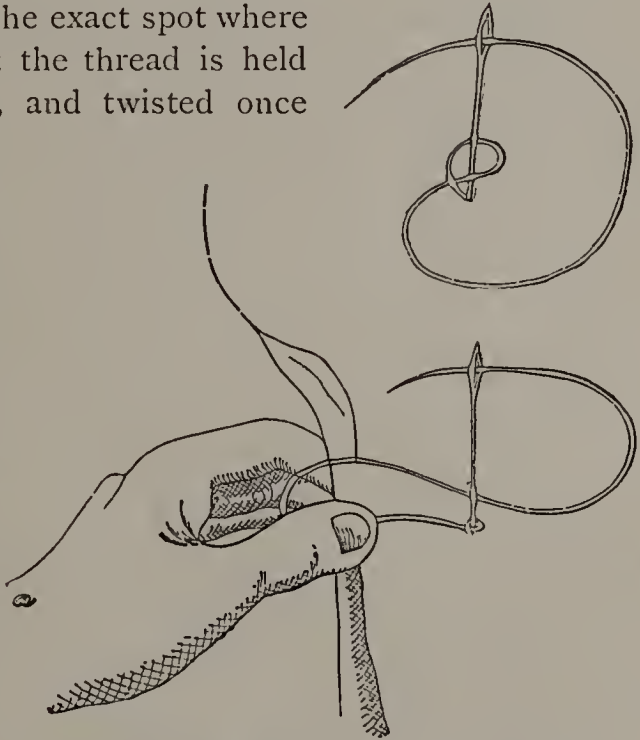
Blanket Stitch is used for working the edges of table-covers, mantle valances, blankets, &c., or for edging any



No. 5. — BLANKET STITCH.

other material. It is simply a button-hole stitch, and may be varied in many ways, — by sloping the stitches alternately to right and left; by working two or three together, and leaving a space between them and the next set; or by working a second row round the edge of the cloth, over the first, with a different shade of wool.

Knotted Stitch, or *French Knot*, is used for the centres of such flowers as the daisy or wild rose, and sometimes for the anthers of others. The needle is brought up at the exact spot where the knot is to be: the thread is held in the left hand, and twisted once or twice round the needle, the point of which is then passed through the fabric, close to the spot where it came up: the right hand draws it underneath, while the thumb of the left keeps the thread in its place until the knot is secure. The knots are



No. 6. — KNOTTED STITCH, OR FRENCH KNOT.

increased in size according to the number of twists round the needle. When properly made, they should look like beads, and lie in perfectly even and regular rows.

This stitch is very ancient, and does not seem confined to any country, and the Chinese execute large and elabo-

rate pieces of embroidery in it, introducing beautiful shading. A curious specimen of very fine knotting stitch was exhibited at the Royal School in 1878, probably of French workmanship. It was a portrait of St. Ignatius Loyola, not more than six inches in length, and was entirely executed in knots of such fineness, that, without a magnifying glass, it was impossible to discover the stitches. This, however, is a *tour de force*, and not quoted as worthy of imitation.

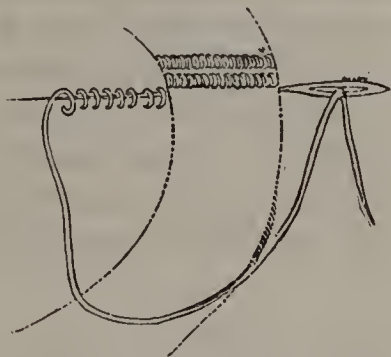
There is one variety of this stitch, in which the thread is twisted a great many times round the needle, so as to form a sort of curl instead of a single knot. This is found in many ancient embroideries, where it is used for the hair of saints and angels in ecclesiastical work.¹

Knotted stitch was also employed largely in all its forms in the curious and ingenious but ugly style in vogue during the reign of James I., when the landscapes were frequently worked in cross or feather stitch, while the figures were raised over stuffing, and dressed, as it were, in robes made entirely in point lace, or button-hole stitches executed in silk. The foliage of the trees and shrubs which we generally find in these embroidered pictures, as well as the hair in the figures, were worked in knotted stitches of varying sizes, while the faces were in tent stitch, or painted on white silk, and fastened on to the canvas or linen ground.

Another variety of knotting which is still occasionally used resembles *bullion*, being made into a long roll. A stitch of the length of the intended roll is taken in the material, the point of the needle being brought to the surface again in the same spot from which the thread originally started; the thread is then twisted eight or ten times

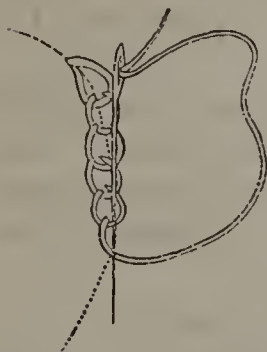
¹ Other methods of French knot described on pp. 43, 44 of this book.

round the point of the needle, which is drawn out carefully through the tunnel formed by the twists, this being kept in its place by the left thumb. The point of the needle is then inserted once more in the same place as it first entered the material, the long knot or roll being drawn so as to lie evenly between the points of insertion and re-appearance, thus treating the twisted thread as if it were bullion or purl.



N. 7. — BULLION KNOT.

Chain Stitch is but little used in embroidery now, although it may sometimes be suitable for lines. It is made by taking a stitch from right to left, and, before the needle is drawn out, the thread is brought round towards the worker, and under the point of the needle.



NO. 8. — CHAIN STITCH.

The next stitch is taken from the point of the loop thus formed forwards, and the thread again kept under the point, so that a regular chain is formed on the surface of the material.

This chain stitch was much employed for ground patterns in the beautiful gold-colored work on linen, for dress or furniture, which prevailed from the time of James I. to the middle of the eighteenth century. It gave the appearance of quilting when worked on linen in geometrical designs or in fine and often-repeated arabesques. Examples of it come to us from Germany and Spain, in which the design is embroidered in satin

stitch, or entirely filled in with solid chain stitch, in a uniform gold color.¹

Chain stitch resembles *Tambour-work*, which we shall describe amongst framework stitches, though it is not at present practised at the Royal School of Art-Needlework.

Twisted Chain, or Rope Stitch.

Effective for outlines on coarse materials, such as blankets, carriage-rugs, footstools, &c.

It is like an ordinary chain, except that, in place of starting the second stitch from the centre of the loop, the



NO. 9. — TWISTED CHAIN.

needle is taken back to half the distance behind it, and the loop is pushed to one side to allow the needle to enter in a straight line with the former stitch. It is not of much use, except when worked with double crewel or with tapestry wool, and should then have the appearance of a twisted rope.²

Feather Stitch. — Vulgarly called “*long and short stitch*,” “*long stitch*,” and sometimes “*embroidery stitch*.” We propose to restore to it its ancient title of feather stitch (“*Opus Plumarium*”), so called from its supposed resemblance to the plumage of a bird.

We shall now describe it as used for hand-work, and later (at p. 13), as worked in a frame. These two modes differ very little in appearance, as the principle is the same, namely, that the stitches are of varying length,

¹ Chain stitch is less used here as outline, because it can be so easily imitated by the machine that it does not gain the credit of being hand-work. — *Am. Editor*.

² This is sometimes called Charles II. Stitch, not that he embroidered with it himself; but it is found in work of the time of Charles II. — *Am. Editor*.

and are worked into and between each other, adapting themselves to the form of the design; but in hand-work the needle is kept on the surface of the material.

This stitch and stem stitch are more carefully described farther on, on pp. 23, 24. The illustrations given here show how, though the stitch itself may be called the same, the effect is made to differ by working the stem stitch along a line, and carrying the needle in and out above the last stitch.

Feather stitch is generally used for embroidering flowers, whether natural or conventional.

In working the petal of a flower (such as we have chosen for our illustration), the outer part is first worked in with stitches which form a close, even edge on the outline, but a broken one towards the centre of the petal, being alternately long and short. These edging stitches resemble satin stitch in so far that the same amount of crewel or silk appears on the under as on the upper side of the work. They must slope towards the narrow part of the petal.



NO. 10. — FEATHER STITCH.

The next stitches are somewhat like an irregular "stem," inasmuch as they are longer on the surface than on the under side, and are worked in between the uneven lengths of the edging-stitches so as to blend with them. The petal is then filled up by other stitches, which start

from the centre, and are carried between those already worked.

When the petal is finished, the rows of stitches, should be so merged in each other that they cannot be distinguished; and, when shading is used, the colors should appear to melt into each other.

In serrated leaves, such as Hawthorn, or Virginia Creeper, the edging-stitches follow the broken outline of the leaf, instead of forming an even outer edge.

It is necessary to master thoroughly this most important stitch; but practice only can make the worker perfect.

The work should always be started by running the thread a little way in front of the embroidery. Knots should never be used except in rare cases, when it is impossible to avoid them. The thread should always be finished off on the surface of the work, never at the back, where there should be no needless waste of material. No untidy ends or knots should ever appear there: in fact, the wrong side should be quite as neat as the right. It is a mistake to suppose that pasting will ever do away with the evil effects of careless work, or will steady embroidery which has been commenced with knots, and finished with loose ends at the back.

The stitches vary constantly according to their application, and good embroiderers differ in their manner of using them; some preferring to carry the thread back towards the centre of the petal, on the surface of the work, so as to avoid waste of material; others making their stitches as in satin stitch,—the same on both sides: but these details may be left to the intelligence and taste of the worker, who should never be afraid of trying experiments, or working out new ideas.

Nor should she ever fear to pick out her work ; for only by experiment can she succeed in finding the best combinations, and one little piece ill done will be sufficient to spoil her whole embroidery, as no touching-up can afterwards improve it.

We have now named the principal stitches used in hand-embroidery, whether to be executed in crewel or silk.

There are, however, numberless other stitches used in crewel embroidery ; such as ordinary stitching, like that used in plain needlework, in which many designs were formerly traced on quilted backgrounds ; others, again, are many of them lace stitches, or forms of herringbone, and are used for filling in the foliage of large conventional floriated designs, such as we are accustomed to see in the English crewel-work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on a twilled cotton material resembling our modern Bolton sheeting.

It would be impossible to describe or even enumerate them all, as varieties may be constantly invented by an ingenious worker to enrich her design ; and in lace work there are already one hundred named stitches, which occasionally are used in decorative embroidery. Most of these, if required, can be shown as taught at the Royal School of Art Needlework, and are illustrated by samplers, and are taught in our schools in America.

Descriptions of many of these stitches are to be found in the successive numbers of Tilton's Art-Needlework Series.

STITCHES USED IN FRAME EMBROIDERY.

Feather Stitch. — In frame-work, as in hand-work, we restore the ancient name of *Feather work* or stitch (*Opus*

Plumarium). We have already said that it was so called from its likeness to the plumage of a bird.

This comes from the even lie of the stitches, which fit into and appear to overlap each other, presenting thus a marked contrast to the granulated effect of tent stitches, and the long ridges of the *Opus Anglicum*, having no hard lines, as in stem stitch, or flat surface, as in satin stitch.

Feather stitch when worked in a frame is exactly the same as that worked in the hand, except that it is more even and smooth. The needle is taken backwards and forwards through the material in stitches of varying lengths; the next row always fitting into the vacant spaces, and projecting beyond them, so as to prepare for the following row.

Every possible gradation of color can be effected in this way; and it applies to every form of design, — floral or arabesque. Natural flowers have mostly been worked in this stitch.

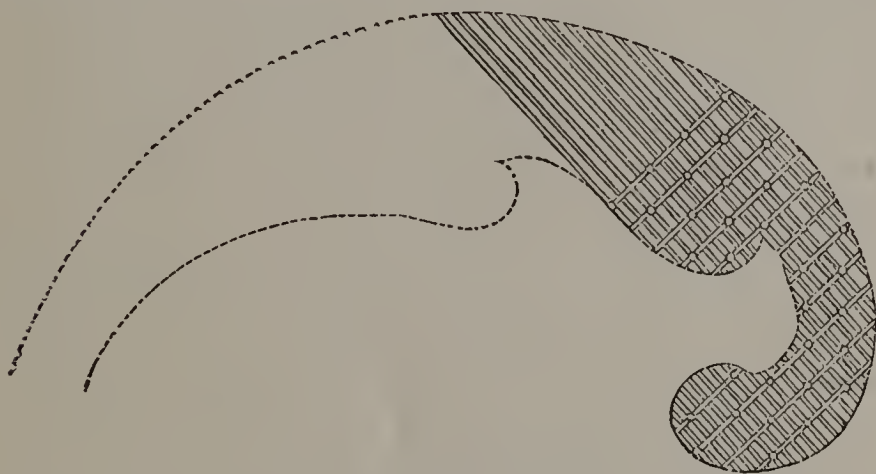
A skilful embroiderer will be careful not to waste more silk than is absolutely necessary on the back of the work, while at the same time she will not sacrifice the artistic effect by being too sparing of her back-stitches.

“COUCHING,” OR LAID EMBROIDERY.

This name is properly applied to all forms of embroidery in which the threads of crewel, silk, or gold, are laid on the surface, and stitched on to it by threads coming from the back of the material. Under this head may be classed as varieties the ordinary “laid backgrounds,” “diaper couchings,” “brick stitch,” “basket stitch,” and the various forms of stuffed couchings which are found in ancient embroideries. Couching outlines are usually thick strands of double crewel, tapestry wool, filoselle,

cord, or narrow ribbon, laid down and stitched at regular intervals by threads crossing the couching line at right angles. They are used for coarse outline work, or for finishing the edges of appliqué.

Plain Couching, or "*Laid Embroidery*." — The threads are first laid evenly and straight from side to side of the space to be filled in (whether in the direction of warp or woof depends on the pattern), the needle being passed through to the back, and brought up again not quite close, but at a sufficient distance to allow of an intermediate stitch being taken backwards; thus the threads



No. 11. — PLAIN COUCHING.

would be laid alternately first, third, second, fourth, and so on. This gives a better purchase at each end than if they were laid consecutively in a straight line. If the line slants much, it is not necessary to alternate the rows. When the layer is complete, threads of metal, or of the same or different color and texture, are laid across at regular intervals, and are fixed down by stitches from the back.

The beauty of this work depends upon its regularity.

This kind of embroidery, which we find amongst the old Spanish, Cretan, and Italian specimens, is very useful where broad, flat effects without shading are required; but, unless it is very closely stitched down, it is not durable, if there is any risk of its being exposed to rough usage. It is possible to obtain very fine effects of color in this style of work, as was seen in the old Venetian curtains transferred and copied for Louisa, Lady Ashburton. These were shown at the time of the Exhibition of Ancient Needlework at the Royal School of Art Needlework in 1878.

Ancient embroidery can be beautifully restored by grounding in "laid work," instead of transferring it, where the ground is frayed, and the work is worthy of preservation. It must be stretched on a new backing, the frayed material carefully cut away, and the new ground couched as we have described.

In other varieties of couching, under which come the many forms of diapering, the threads are "laid" in the same manner as for ordinary couching; but, in place of laying couching lines across these, the threads of the first layer are simply stitched down from the back, frequently with threads of another color.

Net-patterned Couching. — The fastening stitches are placed diagonally instead of at right angles, forming a network, and are kept in place by a cross-stitch at each intersection.

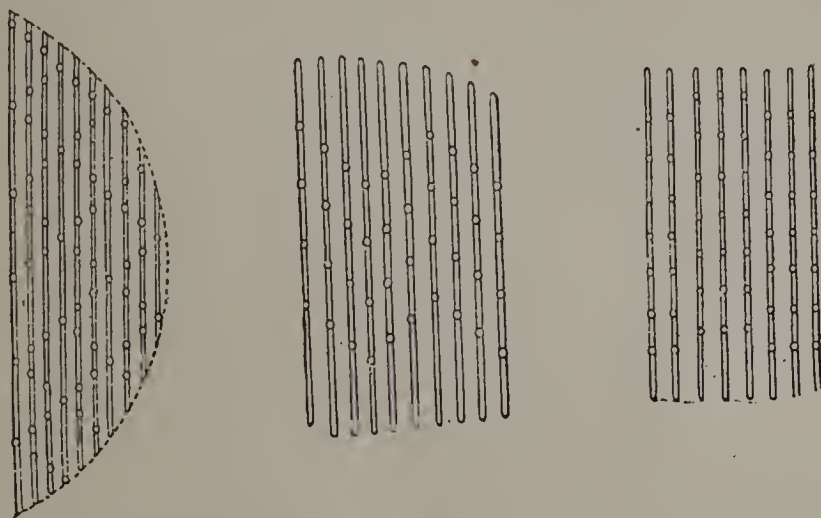
This style of couching was commonly used as a ground in ecclesiastical work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Brick Stitch. — The threads are laid down two together, and are stitched across at regular intervals. The next two threads are then placed together by the side, the fasten-

ing stitches being taken at the same distance from each other, but so as to occur exactly between the previous couplings, thus giving the effect of brick-work.

Diaper Couchings. — By varying the position of the fastening stitches, different patterns may be produced, such as diagonal crossings, diamonds, zigzags, curves, &c.

They are properly all gold stitches; but purse silk, thin cord, or even untwisted silk may be used.



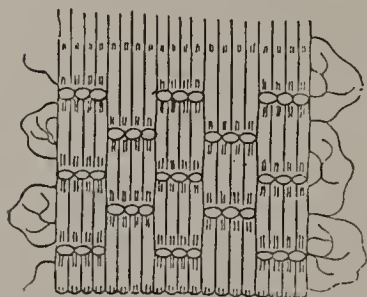
NO. 12. — THREE ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIAPER COUCHINGS.

A wonderful example of the many varieties of diapering is to be seen in the South Kensington Museum, No. 689. It is modern Belgian work, executed for the Paris Exhibition of 1867. As a specimen of fine and beautiful diapering in gold, this could scarcely be surpassed.

Basket Stitch is one of the richest and most ornamental of these ancient modes of couching. Rows of "stuffing," manufactured in the form of soft cotton cord, are laid across the pattern, and firmly secured. Across these are placed gold threads, two at a time; and these are stitched down over each two rows of stuffing. The two gold

threads are turned at the edge of the pattern, and brought back close to the last, and fastened in the same way. Three double rows of gold may be stitched over the same two rows of stuffing.

The next three rows must be treated as brick stitch, and fastened exactly between the previous stitchings, and so on, until the whole space to be worked is closely covered with what appears to be a golden wicker-work.



NO. 13. — BASKET STITCH.

Strong silk must be used for the stitching.

The Spanish School of Embroidery has always been famed for its excellence in this style, and has never lost the art. The "Embroiderers of the King," as they are called, still turn out splendid specimens of this heavy and elaborate work, which are used for the gorgeous trappings of the horses of the nobility on gala days and state occasions.

A beautiful specimen was exhibited at the Royal School of Art Needlework, in 1878, by the Countess Brownlow, of an altar-hanging entirely worked in basket stitch, in gold on white satin; and a modern example is still to be seen at the school, in a large counterpane which was worked for the Philadelphia Exhibition, from an ancient one also belonging to Lady Brownlow.

The Spanish embroiderers used these forms of couching over stuffing with colored silks as well as gold, and produced wonderfully rich effects. One quilt exhibited by Mrs. Alfred Morrison in 1878 was a marvel of coloring and workmanship.

Basket stitch is mostly used now for church embroidery,

or for small articles of luxury, such as ornamental pockets, caskets, &c.

Diapering is generally employed in the drapery of small figures, and in ecclesiastical work.

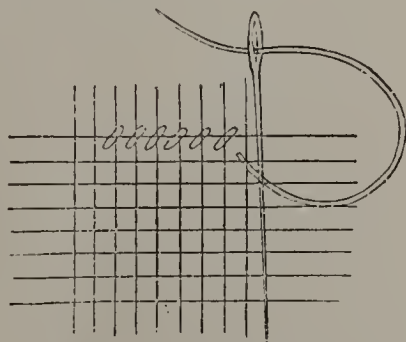
Many fabrics are manufactured in imitation of the older diapered backgrounds, and are largely used to replace them. Among these are the material known as silk brocatine, and several kinds of cloth-of-gold mentioned in our list of materials.

CUSHION STITCHES.

Cushion Stitch — the ancient *Opus Pulvinarium* of the middle ages, likewise called “Cross Stitch” — may lay claim to be one of the most ancient known in embroidery. There have been many varieties; but the principle is the same in all. It is worked on and through canvas, of which the threads, as in tapestry, regulate the stitches.

After six centuries of popularity it finally died out within the last few years as “Berlin-wool work;” but will doubtless be revived again in some form after a time, as being well fitted for covering furniture on account of its firmness and durability.

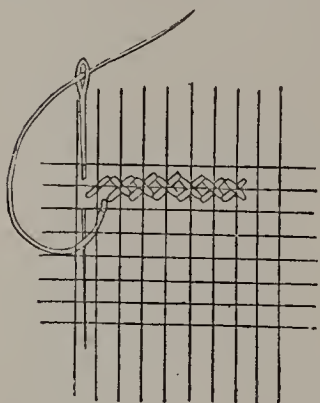
In Germany and Russia it is still much used for embroidering conventional designs on linen; and the beautiful Cretan and Persian work of which so much has lately been in the market, is executed in this style.



NO. 14. — TENT STITCH.

Tent Stitch may be placed first under this class, in which the thread coming from beneath is carried over a single cross of the warp and woof of the canvas.

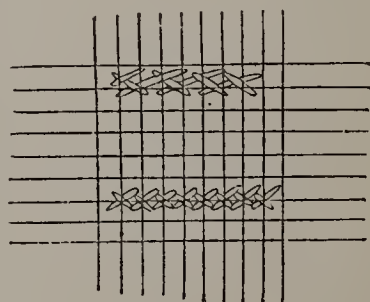
Simple Cross Stitch. — The worsted or silk is brought up again to the surface, one thread to the left of the spot where the needle was inserted, and is crossed over the first or “tent” stitch, forming a regular and even cross on the surface.



NO. 15. — SIMPLE CROSS STITCH.

Persian Cross Stitch. — The peculiarity of this stitch is, that, in the first instance, the silk or worsted is carried across two threads of the canvas ground, and is brought up in the intermediate space. It is then crossed over the latter half of the original stitch, and a fresh start is made.

Much of the beauty of Persian embroidery is produced by the irregularity of the crossing; the stitches being taken in masses, in any direction that seems most suitable to the design in hand, instead of being placed in regular rows, with the stitches all sloping in one direction, as is the case with the modern “Berlin work:” this, with the happy choice of colors for which the Persians are so justly famous, produces a singular richness of effect.



NO. 16. — PERSIAN CROSS STITCH.

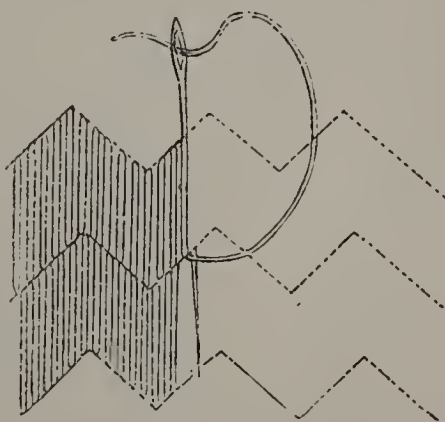
Allied to these canvas stitches, and having their origin in them, are the numerous forms of groundings, which are now worked on coarse linens, or in fact on any fabric, and have sometimes, although incorrectly, been called darning stitches, probably from their resemblance to the patterns which are found on samplers,

for darning stockings, old table linen, &c. Almost any pattern can be produced in this style of embroidery, simply by varying the relative length of the stitches.

Following the nomenclature of the committee which named and catalogued the specimens of ancient needlework exhibited in the South Kensington Museum in 1872, we have classed all the varieties of these grounding stitches under the name of Cushion Stitch.

Cushion Stitches are taken, as in laid embroidery, so as to leave all the silk and crewel on the surface, and only a single thread of the ground is taken up; but in place of lying in long lines, from end to end of the material, they are of even length, and are taken in a pattern, such as a waved line or zigzag; so that, when finished, the ground presents the appearance of a woven fabric.

We give an illustration of one variety of cushion stitch, which may either be worked as described here, in the frame, or in the hand, as in the woodcut.



No. 17.—CUSHION STITCH.

A good modern example of this background was exhibited in the Royal School of Art Needlework, on a bed-hanging worked for the Hon. Mrs. Percy Wyndham, from a design by Mr. W. Morris. In the Exhibition of Ancient Needlework last year were many beautiful specimens, notably one enormous wall-hanging of Italian seventeenth-century work, lent by Earl Spencer. Many of the fabrics known as "Tapestries" are woven imitations of these grounds, and carry embroidery so perfectly, that on the

whole, except for small pieces, it seems a waste of hand-labor to work them in, as the effect is not very far removed from that of woven material; while the expense is, of course, very much greater.

The ancient specimens of this stitch are worked on a coarse canvas, differing greatly from that which was recently used for Berlin-wool work.

It cannot now be obtained, except by having it especially made to order. It has been replaced by a coarse hand-woven linen for the use of the school; but the ancient canvas is vastly superior, as its looseness makes it easier for the worker to keep her stitches in regular lines.

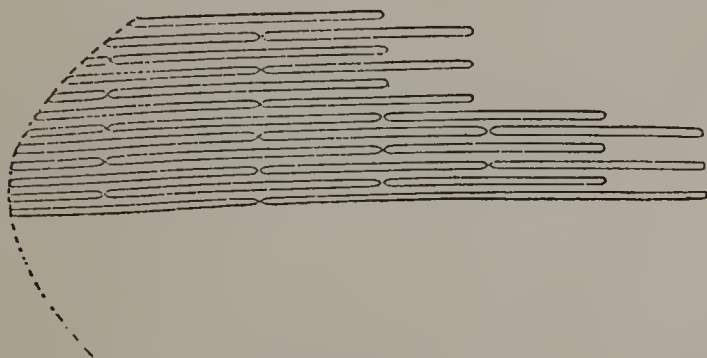
In some ancient specimens the design is worked in feather stitch, and the whole ground in cushion stitch; in others the design is in fine cross or tent stitch. There are several very beautiful examples of this kind of embroidery in the South Kensington Museum, — Italian, of the seventeenth century.

A variety of cushion stitch which we frequently see in old Italian embroideries was taught in the Royal School of Art Needlework by Miss Burden, and used, under her direction, in working flesh in some large figures designed by Mr. Walter Crane for wall decoration, and exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. The stitches are kept of one uniform length across the design. The next row is started from half the depth of the preceding stitch, and kept of the same length throughout. Its beauty consists in its perfect regularity. If worked in the hand, the needle is brought back underneath the material, as in satin stitch; but in the frame all the silk or worsted can be worked on the surface, with the exception of the small fastening stitches.

The effect when finished is that of a woven fabric.

It is really more suitable in its original character of a ground stitch than for working flesh. We have given an illustration of it, because we are so frequently asked to describe "Burden Stitch."

This form of cushion stitch worked extremely fine has been used for flesh in very ancient embroideries, even before the introduction of the *Opus Anglicanum*, and is found in the works of the Flemish, German, Italian, and French schools of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.



No. 18. — "BURDEN" STITCH.

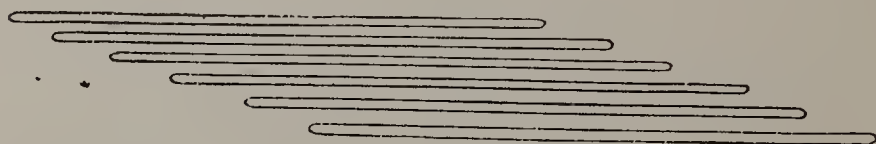
It seems to have been worked in a frame, on fine canvas, or on a fabric of very even threads, and the stitches so taken, that the same amount of silk appears on the back as on the surface of the embroidery.

In a toilet-cover of ancient Spanish work recently added to the South Kensington Museum, the design is entirely embroidered in varieties of *cushion stitch* in black floss silk upon a white linen ground. It is, however, extremely rare to see this stitch used in any other way than as a ground, except in actual canvas work; in which we often see varieties of it used to fill in portions of the design, while another stitch will be devoted entirely to the ground-ing.

These stitches were often executed on an open net.

Stem Stitch is used in frame embroidery, and does not differ in any way from that described at p. 4, under "hand-work," except that the needle is, of course, worked through the material with both hands, as is the case in all frame-work. The same may be said of "split stitch;" but this is more frequently (because more easily) worked in a frame than done in the hand.

Japanese Stitch is a modification of stem; but its peculiarity consists in the worker taking very long stitches,



No. 19. — JAPANESE STITCH.

and then bringing the needle back to within a short distance of the first starting-place; so that they may be in even parallel lines, advancing by gradation from left to right. It is principally used for working water or ground in a landscape.

Tambour-Work has fallen into disuse, but was greatly admired when our grandmothers, in the last century, sprigged Indian muslins or silks with colored flowers for dresses, and copied or adapted Indian designs on fine linen coverlets. These were very refined, but no more effective than a good chintz. There are exquisite specimens of the stitch to be seen in most English homes; and in France it was in vogue in the days of Marie Antoinette. Its use is now almost confined to the manufacture of what is known as Irish or Limerick lace, which is made on net in the old tambour frames, and with a tambour or crochet hook. The frame is formed of two rings of wood

or iron, made to fit loosely one within the other.¹ Both rings are covered with baize or flannel wound round them till the inner one can only just be passed through the outer. The fabric to be embroidered is placed over the smaller hoop, and the other is pressed down over it, and firmly fixed with a screw. A small wooden frame of this description is universally used in Ireland for white embroidery on linen or muslin. In tambour-work the thread is kept below the frame, and guided by the left hand; while the hook or crochet-needle is passed from the surface through the fabric, and brings up a loop of the thread through the preceding stitch, and the needle again inserted, forming thus a close chain on the surface of the work.

The difficulty of working chain stitch in a frame probably led to the introduction of a hook for this class of embroidery.

Perhaps we ought not to omit all mention of the *Opus Anglicum* or *Anglicanum* (English work); though it is strictly ecclesiastical, and therefore does not enter into our province.

Dr. Rock² and other authorities agree in thinking that the distinctive feature of this style, which was introduced about the end of the thirteenth century, was a new way of working the flesh in subjects containing figures.

Instead of the faces being worked in rows of straight stitches (like that described as Burden stitch on p. 23), as we see in the old Flemish, German, and Italian work of the same period, the English embroiderers invented a new stitch, which they commenced in the centre of the

¹ Illustration of this frame on p. .

² See Dr. Rock's preface to his *Descriptive Catalogue of Textile Fabrics in the Kensington Museum*.

cheek, and worked round and round, gradually letting the lines fall into outer circles of ordinary feather stitch.

Having thus prepared an elastic surface, they proceeded to model the forms, and make lights and shadows, by pressing the work into hollows with small heated metal balls, the work being probably damped as a preparation for this process. So skilfully did they carry out their intention, that the effect is still the same after the lapse of five centuries. We must unwillingly add, that, though much appreciated in the thirteenth century, the effect is rather curious and quaint than beautiful.

The Syon cope in the Kensington Museum, of the thirteenth century, is a fine specimen of this attempt to give the effect of bas-relief to the sacred subjects depicted. The whole cope shows how various were the stitches worked at that period. On examination with a microscope, the flesh stitch appears to be merely a fine split stitch worked spirally, as we now work fruit.

CHAPTER II.

MATERIALS USED IN COLORED EMBROIDERY.

“Richesse a robe of purple on had,
Ne trow not that she had it mad,
Ne by a thousand deale so riche,
Ne none so faire, for it full well
With orfrais laid was every dell
And purtraid in the ribanings,
With Dukes stories, and of Kings.”

CHAUCER.

I.—LINEN.

THE textile fabrics suitable for embroidery are not very numerous, and, with very few exceptions, are exactly similar to those that were in use centuries ago. Modern industry has not done much for us, either by discovering new materials, or by inventing novel modes of manufacturing the old ones. Linen is one of the oldest fabrics used for embroidery: it is well adapted for that purpose, and many kinds may be used.

Roller-towelling, of a loose texture, is an excellent material, especially for beginners and children, as it is easy to work on and very cheap. It may be used for anti-macassars (“tidies” for chairs), table-mats, kettle-holders, d’oyleys; but it is too gray and coarse and narrow for light tea-cloths to put under a tea-service, though it is used for that purpose. We have also seen it used as a temporary cover to protect a costly Turkish table-cover.

instead of the latter being removed when the table it covers is used for writing, &c.

“Crash” is the specific name of the gray linen now so much used for crewel-work, that embroidery on it in crewels is often called “crash-work.” But as it is possible that the present fashion—which, indeed, almost amounts to a rage—will soon pass away, we do not recommend this material for any piece of needle-work. For “tidies” it is excellent; so it is for toilet-covers, toilet-mats, and nightdress-cases, which may be worked to match, and which make very pretty sets when finished. But for drawing-room curtains, and portières, embroidered with silks, we should advise nobler materials.

There is a lighter towelling, that, if chosen with judgment, makes excellent embroidery stuff: it is found of a very agreeable color, warmer in tone than crash, and pale enough sometimes to be used. The English use this for “tea-cloths” for their favorite “five-o’clock” teas.

Very beautiful white linen, of a good width, may be had for “five-o’clock-tea-cloths.” The warp and the woof should be of the same thickness in linen used for embroidery.

Fine white linen is sometimes used for silk embroidery, especially when the whole surface is to be covered.

Twilled linen, very stout, and of a narrow width, is made sometimes expressly for borderings.

There is also the “mummy-cloth” before alluded to, both linen and cotton. The linen forms a charming material for embroidery. The cotton is heavier, but suitable for curtains. A pretty linen material like striped jean is very handsome for embroidery; and nice white duck, if found smooth and even, is also serviceable.

All these fabrics can be found now in most of the shops

where materials for embroidery are sold, with varieties of names, — mummy-cloth, bamboo-cloth, &c.

Strainer-cloth is used for curtains, and embroidery is very pretty on it. It resembles a little the thin cottons made in India, and used for embroidery.

II. — COTTON.

Very few cotton textures are used for embroidery. Our American cottons are too heavy. Unbleached sheeting or cotton flannel, a thick coarse twill of the color technically called "gray," but really yellowish, is, however, much used for crewel-work just now. Very pretty summer frocks for little children may be made with it, ornamented in crewels; and, as nearly all crewels wash well, an elegant little costume may be had at a very small expense.

Twilled cotton may be had in several colors, and answers very well for some purposes to which ornamental needlework may be applied, — for instance, the covering of chair-seats. In this material there is a fine, cool earth-brown, inclining to purple in the shadows, which has a rich effect as a foundation for embroidery. There is also a very dark blue, which is an excellent color, or any color can be obtained by dyeing.

Muslin may be used for embroidery. We have seen very pretty aprons worked in crewels, which, with a little care, wash extremely well. Doubtless most of our readers have seen and admired exquisite specimens of Indian muslins enriched with needlework in gold and floss-silk. We do not say that it would be beyond their skill to imitate these productions; but as the muslin fitted for the purpose is both expensive, and difficult to obtain, we do not counsel them to attempt the task, except for such unimportant things as sashes and little scarfs.

III. — WOOLLEN FABRICS.

Serge is one of the very best materials for embroidery. There is a thin, harsh serge, and there are other kinds that are thick, soft, and rich-looking. The first is by no means the worst. There is also a serge which is twilled only on one side, and which makes a capital firm ground for needlework.

Cloth is well adapted for appliqué work and silk embroidery, but it does not do so well for crewel-work as serge. It should be chosen with very little dress (to use a technical term) upon it.

Cloths and serges may be had in all colors. We have seen some exquisite salmon-pinks in the former, and beautiful blues and yellows in the latter. Blues seldom look well in cloth, the material is too smooth and glossy; but the diagonal rib of the serge fabrics produces a play of light and shade that takes off from the coldness and harshness of the blue tints.

Merinos and cashmeres may be embroidered in silk for dresses, jackets, &c.

These fabrics can be found at the principal upholsterers.

IV. — SILK FABRICS.

Nearly all kinds of silk are suitable for embroidery: even thin sarcenets will look well when backed by holland or paper. The thin silks also may be used for appliqué work, with very good effect for purposes where great strength is not required. The rep-silks and diapered silks, thick and soft, are almost the only kinds of silk that should be used for ecclesiastical embroidery.

Of all textile fabrics, however, there are none to compare with satin for beauty of effect, when embroidered

with silk. Its surface, smooth and lustrous almost as polished metal, reflects surrounding colors to a greater extent than any other woven material ; while, from the peculiarity of its texture, its highest lights are few and crisp, and the greater part of its surface, therefore, is nearly always in half-tint or shadow, and the deep shadows of the larger folds are themselves lighted up by innumerable reflections. This shimmer of light and shade — this changefulness — serves to bring into harmony colors the most harshly opposed to each other ; and therein lies the explanation of the fact that ladies may venture to wear satins of a color that in any other stuff would be, to say the least, “very trying” to their complexions. Nevertheless we would not be understood to counsel our readers to embroider satin without any regard to harmonious arrangement of color, and to trust to its precious qualities to set things right for them.

V. — PILED FABRICS.

Velvets, both cotton and silk, receive embroidery well. They are also used in appliqué work on serge, cloth, silk, and velvets of another color. When a very pure white is required, it is almost necessary to use cotton velvet, as silk velvet nearly always inclines to gray or yellow. The shorter the pile of velvet, and consequently the more costly, the better it is adapted for needlework.

Utrecht velvet looks very well ornamented in crewel-work, and is especially suitable for mantle-piece hangings, wall-friezes, portières, and curtains.

There is also a handsome material in ribbed velveteen, which may be had in nearly all shades of drab and brown, and which looks extremely well for similar purposes, when worked with a fine, bold design in crewels. It should be very soft, thick, and pliant.

VI. — CREWELS, SILKS, GOLD AND SILVER.

Crewels are the only kind of worsted used for colored embroidery. They are made with only two plies, and their loose twist causes them, in working, to form lines which may be compared to the lines in copperplate engravings. This is a very great advantage from an artistic point of view. In color, too, they may be brilliant without being harsh; and they are to be had in such an immense variety of tints and shades, that in working with them one may almost be said to paint in worsted.

The embroidery silks are floss (coarse and fine), Dacca and Mitorse silks, and filoselle.

Dacca is more useful than floss, on account of the readiness with which it can be split into filaments.

Mitorse is an excellent silk, though Berlin silk is to a great extent taking its place. It is the silk used by the Chinese and Japanese for their double embroideries; but it requires skill in using, as it is difficult to keep the twist of one size.

Filoselle is what the French call "*bourre de soie*." It is made from the waste cocoons: that is to say, the cocoons from which the moths have been allowed to emerge, causing thereby a "solution of continuity" of the filament. Instead, therefore, of the silk being reeled off, it is spun, and is, in fact, the raw material from which what we call spun silk is made. Filoselle is not much used in embroidery at present; but as it is cheap and very durable, and easier to work with than floss, there seems no reason why it should not become more general. Lack of brilliancy would not be an undesirable quality in embroidery for dresses for daily wear.

Purse-silks and silk cords are also used in embroidery.

Sewing-silks, when thick and soft, of the kind sold in skeins, may also be used. The Japanese embroideries on satin, now so much in vogue for mounting as screens, are nearly all executed in a silk which appears to be similar to our sewing-silks.

Chenille was formerly much used in combination with silk, in embroideries on the more precious stuffs.

Gold and silver are not much used at present, except in church embroidery, which does not come within the scope of the present work. Perhaps, now that gold and silver braid is so generally worn on dresses, fashion may give a turn to these materials for embroidery. Cord is generally used for edging; and "passing," as it is termed, for "laying" or "couching."

We read in the latest accounts of the fashions, that kid, richly embroidered, is now being used for the close-fitting *cuirasse* bodies of ladies' dresses. We do not think, however, that this material will have more than a temporary and limited vogue.

Silk embroidery is at present rather expensive work; so our readers will be glad to hear that there exists a reasonable expectation that in a very short time a large supply of silk, unadulterated, and of the finest quality, will be brought into the market from Australia. The climate of Australia is admirably adapted to silkworm culture; and the soil suits the mulberry-trees, which have been extensively planted in that country. Both trees and worms succeed beyond even the expectation of the company formed to promote this important industry. With regard to materials, fresh fabrics are now constantly presented; and an opportunity for choice in tone and color is given for the most artistic workwoman, who had better select for herself from the most enterprising of the dealers in these things.

CHAPTER III.

IMPLEMENTS.

“ Implements of every size,
And formed for various use.” — COWPER.

“ The needle’s sharpnesse profit yeelds and pleasure.”

JOHN TAYLOR: *The Needle’s Excellency.*

THE implements used in colored embroidery are few and simple.

For Illustrations, see Frontispiece.

The needles used are the ordinary round-eyed needles, and the long-eyed embroidery-needles. The latter are used for crewel and floss silks, and the former for twisted silks and cords and for gold and silver threads. No. 19 (illustration) will show the form of needles desired for crewels and floss. They are what are usually called worsted-needles, pointed; though for many materials a common darning-needle, if it can be found sufficiently fine, would be preferred. They should be chosen so large as to allow them to carry the thread easily through the stuff to be embroidered, and the eye should be large enough to take the thread immediately, and allow of its being drawn backwards and forwards without distressing it. If you have to tug a needle through the stuff, it is too small, and should immediately be rejected; for tugging spoils material, and, besides that, wastes the time, strength, and temper of the worker, to a much greater extent than

might be generally supposed. It is almost needless to say, always choose the *best* needles. Thimbles should be particularly smooth; if new and rough they catch and worry floss silks and loosely twisted threads. They should, therefore, before being taken into use for embroidery, have been used for common needlework for some time.

A stiletto (see illustrations Nos. 7, 8) will be wanted to make holes for taking thick edging cords through the stuff.

Another tool is necessary to the embroiderer. 'This is a little instrument of steel called a "piercer" (illustration 9) round, and pointed at one end like a stiletto, and flat at the other. It is used in gold embroidery to help *lay* the threads, and also in raised work in crewels and silk, and in church embroidery in working silk over cardboard.

A frame is necessary in some kinds of embroidery. The ordinary four-piece frame, the same as used for canvas work, is too well known to need description. (See cut, figs. 2, 3, 4, 5.) The tambour frame is better for dresses and large pieces of work, as no sewing of the stuff is required. It consists of two hoops fitting closely one within the other. (See cut, fig. 1.)

Before leaving the subject of tools it may be well to give a hint or two as to the hands, the most important implements of all. It is *essential*, in all kinds of embroidery, that the hands be clean, soft, and dry. The slightest roughness of the skin will catch and "tease" floss silk: therefore, if the forefinger be rough from plain sewing, it should be well rubbed with pumice-stone. A little silver shield is sometimes worn on the forefinger of the left hand to protect it. In winter the hands should be washed with oatmeal, and most carefully dried. Do not grudge

five minutes or more for drying your hands well ; use a soft old towel, and do not give over rubbing and drying till the towel glides quite smoothly over the skin. The only reason why people have rough hands in winter is that they do not dry them thoroughly after washing. In summer if your hands are inclined to be damp, and you are doing delicate work, wash them frequently in warm water. Take off all rings, bracelets, and the innumerable chains, chatelaines, and other *bibclots*, that ladies are so fond of hanging about their persons, before you set to work : they catch and pull your materials, and bracelets fatigue the wrists more than you are aware of. Rings, too, impede the circulation, and cause weariness in the fingers.

Unless your dress be perfectly fresh and clean, it is well, while you are embroidering, to wear a large linen apron with a bib to it. A pair of linen cuffs should be drawn over your sleeves. The apron should be made with pockets large enough to hold an ample supply of materials, or to take one end of the stuff if you are doing a large piece of work. The support which this gives prevents a good deal of fatigue from the weight of the material, and it also prevents the work from being pulled and dragged. Thus attired, your aspect will be far from romantic ; but you will be amply repaid for the little sacrifice of personal vanity that you may make by the appearance of your work when finished. Even the coarsest and dingiest materials, the darkest crewels on the roughest towelling, show the difference between careful and slovenly treatment, and are the better for dainty niceness of manipulation.

Paste will frequently be required ; and, though it may seem a very common thing, very few people know how to

make it well. It may be bought ready-made at a book-binder's; but, besides being more expensive, it is also more troublesome to purchase ready-made, and a shop may not always be within reach. We give directions how to make it.

Mix some flour and water in a pipkin or saucepan (a pipkin is best, because you can keep it in your workroom, and it does not look unsightly). Add a pinch of rosin or alum to every handful of flour; when quite smoothly mixed, set it on the fire, and keep stirring with a wooden spoon till it thickens. It should not be kept more than a few days.

For appliqué work, as described on p. 44, where paste is necessary, great care should be used in applying it.

After the material is cut out in the figure required, such as a leaf, flower, or scroll, lay it upon clean paper or a towel, and apply the paste with a brush on the wrong side; then put the figure on the foundation in exactly the position where it is needed; lay a towel or smooth cloth over it, and press it with a flat-iron, not too hot. If too much paste is used, it will ooze out from beneath the pattern, in which case, for certain materials, a sponge and warm water may remedy the difficulty. But it is better to be careful that the paste is not too moist, and to use only just enough, as many materials would be injured by water.

CHAPTER IV.

METHOD.

. . . "And with her neeld composes
Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch, or berry;
That even her art sisters the natural roses,
Her inkle, silk, twin with the rubied cherry."

SHAKESPEARE.

I. — TRACING AND TRANSFERRING.

IF the worker is a good enough draughtswoman, we should advise her to draw at once on the material to be wrought upon, if it be not very costly, as her work will thus have a greater freedom of effect. Unless, however, she is very certain of her ability, she had better, at all events at first, attempt only floral designs. In flowers and leaves, exactness of form is not of much importance; but it is otherwise with an ornamental scroll. If she is not skilful enough to draw her design directly on the stuff, she must have recourse to the somewhat tiresome process of tracing and transferring, for which we will now give instructions.

The design may be traced on cartridge or drawing paper, either by placing it against the glass of a window with the cartridge above it, and tracing it with a pen or pencil, or else by first tracing it on tissue or tracing paper, and then transferring it by placing it on the cartridge with a piece of transfer-paper between the two, and going

carefully over the design with an ivory style. The design traced on the cartridge must now be pricked carefully and evenly with a pin or a steel point. It is then to be laid on the material, and pounced; that is to say, pounce or powder is to be rubbed through the pin-holes. When this has been done, the paper is to be removed, and the design will be found to be marked out on the material in little dots. When the halves or four quarters of a design correspond, time may be saved, and greater accuracy obtained, if, instead of drawing each portion of the design, the paper be folded in two or four divisions, and the pattern drawn on the upper side only. The holes can then be pierced through the several divisions at the same time. In this way a more correct pattern will be produced than if every part had been pricked and pounced separately.

Powder-blue or pulverized pipe-clay makes a good pounce. For a dark outline the pipe-clay should be mixed with finely-powdered charcoal. The charcoal used by artists is the best for this purpose, and may be had at the artists' color-shops. Some persons rub in the powder with a stiff, hard brush, of the kind formerly used for Poonah painting, with all the bristles of a length; but a better tool for this purpose is made of list rolled up very tightly. Care should be taken to place the design on the material in the exact place it is to occupy; it should be fixed in its place with weights, and the rubbing should be so managed that neither the paper nor the material shall be disturbed: otherwise the dotted impression will be blurred and indistinct.

When the pricked outline has been removed, the design must be gone over with paint. Use cobalt if the pouncing has been done with blue, and Chinese white if with pipe-

clay, or sepia if with gray. Indian ink makes a good outline on white linen, and may be used with a pen. For painting the outline a short stiff red sable is the best kind of brush. Go over the outline with few and free touches: do not be always lifting the brush, but make bold and sweeping strokes, or the outline will be stiff and feeble, and your embroidery, consequently, an inferior performance. For many purposes, transferring-paper answers to trace the impressions of a pattern. Care should be taken to use the better transferring-paper which does not "crook" the cloth.

II. — FRAMING.

A frame is not essential for all kinds of embroidery. For church-work, embroidery over cardboard, and floss-silk work, however, it should be used. A strip of strong linen or tape should be stitched along the woof ends of the material, which must then be sewn firmly with strong doubled thread to the webbing on the frame. When this has been done, the laths of the frame are to be slipped through the mortice-holes of the other pieces, and the pegs fastened in. The strain should be increased gradually and cautiously till the tension appears sufficient. The woof ends must now be braced to the side-pieces with fine twine. A packing-needle threaded with twine must be drawn through the upper right-hand corner of the tape or linen, and the end securely tied. The twine must be sewn over the lath till the lower corner is reached, knotted securely, and cut off: the other side must be done in the same manner. When the material is larger than the frame, it may be sewn on to the bars, and rolled round one of them, with tissue-paper and wadding between to pre-

vent the creasing of the stuff; when the portion in the frame is finished, it is rolled round the opposite bar, and so on until the work is finished. Or it may be managed in this way, if the stuff to be wrought upon is precious; brace a piece of fine holland in the frame, and then carefully place a portion of the velvet or satin on the holland, and tack it down with small stitches and fine thread. When this piece of the work is finished take it out, put in fresh holland, and spread another portion of material. In this way very large surfaces may be covered very easily and well. A large frame adds greatly to the fatigue of working, and is really very seldom necessary.

III. — PREPARATION OF MATERIALS.

In many cases the material wrought upon requires strengthening by a lining of stronger and less costly stuff. Linen or fine holland is generally used, and very frequently paper: sometimes both paper and holland are employed together. When the *backing* (to use the technical term) is of linen or holland, the process is as follows: The linen is stretched on a frame in the way above described, and, when quite tightly strained, should be covered smoothly and evenly with paste; the velvet or silk is then to be laid upon it, and pressed down, great care being taken that every part of the upper material shall be in immediate contact with the lower. It is best to spread the paste with the fingers, in order that no little lumps be overlooked. Some persons make use of a brush, which is by no means so good a tool as the fingers for producing an even coating of paste. When paper is used for a backing, the woven fabric may be stretched first in a frame, or not, as the worker pleases. With large pieces it is perhaps more convenient to back the material first. When both linen and

paper are used together, the paper should always be undermost, be pasted on first, and allowed to dry completely before the uppermost material is laid down. It is scarcely necessary to observe that the paste must be allowed to dry completely before the embroiderer sets to work.

It may be imagined that these several thicknesses of material will render the working difficult; but this is not the case, as the extreme tension, caused by the framing, makes the admission of the needle easy.

A good deal of embroidery is done by working designs first on linen, and then applying it on richer stuffs. When this is the case, the embroidery is executed first, and then backed by paper; when quite dry it is taken out of the frame, and cut round with a sharp pair of scissors, leaving about one-sixteenth of an inch of linen round the embroidered part, which must be laid on the velvet, and tacked down if the latter is loose; if it is framed, the piece of embroidery should be fastened on it by small pins thrust perpendicularly through. It must then be secured by sewing over in small stitches. The edge of the linen must afterwards be dissimulated by a gold or silver cord fastened down by fine sewing-silk matching the cord in color.

Much of the old embroidery is done in this way, though of course we cannot be sure that it was executed so originally; it being quite possible that the same embroidery may have been transferred to new foundations several times.

Thin and transparent materials, such as muslin or net, may be placed over a muslin lining with the pattern traced thereon, which may be cut away when the work is finished. In many cases the back of the embroidery should be smeared with paste, in order that the ends of silk, &c., may be secured.

IV. — CARDBOARD.

Embroidery over cardboard is principally employed in church-work. For domestic purposes, however, it is occasionally wanted, as, for instance, in monograms and devices for curtain and mantlepiece valances. We therefore give directions for it.

The design is to be drawn in pencil on the cardboard, and then cut out with a penknife or sharp scissors. Care must be taken to leave pieces of cardboard, called "*stays*," to connect together the various parts of the design which might otherwise become disconnected in the cutting out. Then place it on the material, and tack it firmly down with packthread. When it is secured the "*stays*" may be cut away. The best cardboard for this purpose is called thin mounting-board.

V. — THE STITCHES, AND THE MODE OF WORKING.

The stitch used in crewel-work is very simple and very old; though it goes by the name of the "South Kensington stitch," as though it had been invented at the South Kensington school. This name is erroneous; for, as we have already stated in speaking of the work of two generations ago, it is the stitch used by our grandmothers, and might with more propriety be called "our grandmothers' stitch." It is the least mechanical of all stitches used in fancy-work, and much discretion in its practice is left to the worker. It is like the hatching in chalk and water-color drawing: so that the effect be good, it signifies but little what means the artist takes to produce it. This freedom gives a peculiar charm and fascination to working in this long-stitch, which, indeed, has been not inaptly called "painting with the needle."

A knot being made in the worsted, it is brought from the under side of the cloth or linen to the surface, on the line marked out for the pattern. Then the needle is passed back again from the upper side, on the line of the pattern,



DIAGRAM 1. — CREWEL STITCH.

at about a quarter of an inch distance, more or less. It is again brought up below, at about half way from the first point, *at the left* of the thread, and carried on about as far beyond the second. (See diagrams¹ 1 and 2.) If the line is to be made wider (the stalk, for instance, broader, or a leaf or flower to be filled in), after reaching the top of the pattern the same stitch must be worked back inside the first line, the *needle being reversed*. The work might be turned, but a little practice will make reversing the needle more convenient. The object is to bring the lines of work closely together, each new stitch covering the stitch of the line just worked, — “imbricating” it, as the tiles are put on a roof. (See diagrams 3 and 4.)

The length of the stitches must be left entirely to the judgment of the worker, who will make them longer or shorter according to the extent of surface to be covered, the abruptness of the curves, the coarseness or fineness of the material wrought upon, and the destination of the work when finished, &c. Naturally a closer stitch and more solid work are required for anti-

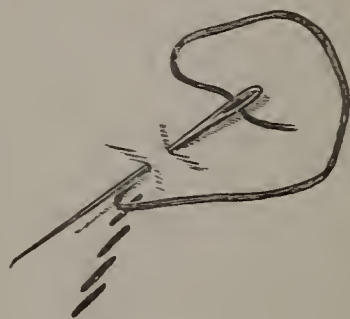


DIAGRAM 2.

macassars or sofa-cushions, which are always coming in contact with fidgety and restless human beings decked out with every kind of ornamental excrescence likely to pull

¹ In these diagrams the spaces between the stitches are much enlarged.

and catch at worsted-work, than for a frieze of needle-work nailed immediately under the ceiling.¹

The stitches should be smoothly and evenly laid, and should resemble the woof of satin.

In working, the outline is to be covered first; for instance, in working the stalk of a flower, begin from the lower end first, and work on the outline till it is crossed by a leaf, or terminates in a flower; then pass the needle to the other side, and work back again to the lower end; then work another line of stitches *inside* the outline till the stalk is filled up. (See diagram 3.)

Leaves that are all one color are worked in the same way, and the veins are put in last. (See diagram 4.)



DIAGRAM 3.—WORKING AN OUTLINE.



DIAGRAM 4.—OUTLINE OF LEAF.

Variegated leaves and shaded flower-petals are treated differently, though the stitch is still the same. The outer edge of color is worked first, beginning *on* the outline, and going towards the centre. Be careful not to take *all* the stitches right up to the inner edge of color, so that the two shades may dovetail into one another, and a sharp, hard, defined line be avoided. (See

¹ In speaking of Paolo of Verona, Vasari mentions with approbation the fact that he worked with the old-fashioned *close* stitch, which besides greater solidity had the advantage of producing an effect more like painting. "This manner of working," he goes on to say, "is now nearly forgotten, and a longer stitch has been adopted, which is less durable and less agreeable to the eye."

diagram 5.) It is quite easy to make curves and angles in this stitch, taking care that the lines of stitches follow the direction of the fibre or *grain* of the object imitated in needlework. Thus the stalk of a plant should never be worked *across*, as we frequently see it done, but invariably lengthwise. Work the leaves the same direction as the fibres in a natural leaf. With such leaves as



DIAGRAM 5. — STITCHES FOR SHADING.

brambles, do one side of the leaf darker than the other. Old-fashioned pieces of *pictorial* embroidery may be advantageously studied in this respect, though we do not recommend our readers to imitate them in others. Good line-engravings, too, will often afford useful hints as to the direction of stitches. Indeed, an embroideress will,

if she loves her art, always have her eyes open, and her mind alert and ready to find instruction. It is very necessary to fill up thin places in this stitch without any appearance of patchiness.

Embroidery in floss silk is executed in this way, the stitches being carefully *laid* with the piercer. This little implement is of great use in working with floss silks; it keeps the fibres open and broad, whereas without it they would be constantly twisting. Before the silk is pulled right through the stuff, it should be passed over and spread on the flat end of the piercer.

This kind of stitch, which the French call *point perdu*, because its beginnings and endings should, in good embroidery, be *lost* and undefined, is, of course, not available

for twisted silks, which require a different treatment ; and *point passé*, or satin stitch, must be adopted. This consists in *passing* the silk from one outline to another. Those beautiful pieces of Indian and Chinese embroidery, with the right and wrong sides exactly alike (making, indeed, two *right sides*), are wrought in this manner. The piercer here again comes in usefully for keeping the stitches even and smooth. Sometimes it is desirable to *raise* certain portions of the work : this may be done with cotton, and the silk taken over the padding, as illustrated in diagram 6. This stitch is used for embroidery over cardboard ; and, when the pattern is to be raised, a piece of string should be sewn in the centre of the cardboard, and the silk taken over it. The stitches should always be taken in a slanting direction ; that is to say, they should, if possible, never run parallel to either the warp or the woof of the material.



DIAGRAM 6. — SATIN STITCH.

Button-hole stitch, coral stitch, chain-stitch, knot-stitch, fern-stitch, &c.,¹ are only used in appliqué work, and then principally to strengthen the material that makes the pattern, and to enrich it. A stitch called *point Russe*,² a long back-stitch something like herring-bone stitch, is sometimes convenient

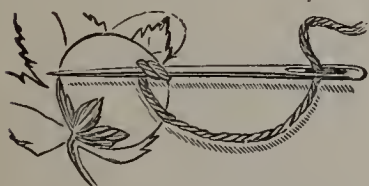


DIAGRAM 7. — FRENCH KNOT, 1.

for light grasses or stalks, by way of contrast to the heavier work in grouping. The French knot is used in most kinds of embroidery ; and, as it requires some skill, we recommend our readers to practise it first with common materials.

¹ Descriptions of these stitches are given in part II. Art Needlework.

² This will be found described, with illustration, in part II. Art Needlework.

It is worked thus: Take about four threads of the material on the needle (or more in coarser work), draw the needle half out; wind the thread (crewel or silk) twice round the point of the needle, hold it tight with the thumb, draw the needle out carefully, and insert it in the place where the stitch was begun, and draw it out at the place where the next stitch is to be worked. (See diagram 7.) In

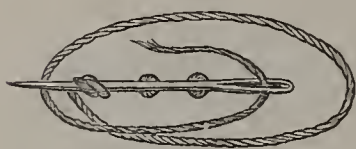


DIAGRAM 8. — FRENCH KNOT, 2.

working without a frame, you vary a little in the manner of placing the needle in completing the stitch. Before drawing the crewel or silk out of the material, hold it tight with the left thumb; leave the needle in the same position, wind the thread twice round it; turn the needle from left to right so (follow the direction of the arrow) that its point arrives where the cotton was drawn out (marked by a cross in illustration); insert the needle there, and draw it out at the place of the next stitch. In one case, to complete the stitch, after winding the thread round, you put the needle in where the stitch was begun: in the other, you put it in where the thread was drawn out. French knots are used for filling up the centres of flowers or wherever raised work is needed.

Edging cords and gold are fastened down by fine sewing-silk taken over them. When the outline is finished, a hole must be made in the stuff with a stiletto, the cord cut off, and the end threaded on a large round-eyed needle, taken through the stiletto-hole, and fastened off securely at the back.

IV. — APPLIQUÉ WORK.

“*Appliqué*” is a French word, which, as it has now no equivalent in the English language, we are forced to use.

“Application” and “applied work” come nearest to the true signification, but are rather awkward to use. Appliqué work consists of a pattern cut out in one color or stuff, and laid on or applied to another.

Appliqué work may be executed in almost every material and for almost every purpose. It is probably the oldest kind of decorative needlework: it certainly is the most simple. Neatness and some degree of mechanical skill are all that are required in the manipulation of the materials. In this kind of ornamental work, even more than in the others, design and color are of higher importance than mere stitchery.

Cloth is one of the most satisfactory materials for appliqué work. It is easy to cut, and at the same time is very solid. It can be had in a great many different shades and colors. The pattern should be traced on it in the manner that has already been described, and cut out with a sharp pair of scissors, and gummed or pasted on to the stuff it is to ornament. When quite dry, it must be secured with fine sewing-silk of the same color, and afterwards worked over with purse or embroidery silk in button-hole stitch in another shade or color. If an edging of cord is used, the button-hole stitch is not required. The cord is sewn down with fine sewing-silk of the same color. When the design is complicated, or in many colors, or it is to be executed in more precious stuff, a tracing should be made on the material it is laid upon, and the parts carefully numbered: they should fit together like a dissected map. In working with velvet, satin, or silk, holland should be stretched in a frame, the design drawn upon it, and the velvet, &c., pasted on the other side, and when dry cut as above directed. When several colors are used, pieces the size of the parts they are required for may be

pasted on the foundation. Cotton-velvet does not require this backing, as it is little liable to fray: gum or starch or paste spread over the back is enough to keep it firm for cutting. Paper is often used for the purpose of backing: tough paper is the best for this.

In cutting out, economize your stuff as much as possible, and make use of the smallest morsels. A great deal of waste may be avoided by a very slight attention to this recommendation. You must remember that in piled fabrics and cloth you get a different shade of color if the stuff does not meet the light in the same direction. So be careful in cutting out and laying down, that the pile always goes the same way. It is well, before pasting down, to lay the pieces flat in the position they are to occupy, and look at them from different points, when any inaccuracy of placing will then be discovered.

For very delicate materials isinglass is sometimes used instead of paste.

Appliqué work is often ornamented afterwards with patterns in different stitches, chain-stitch, coral-stitch, button-hole stitch, &c.; but its chief use is in cases where flat masses of color are required,

VII. — A FEW USEFUL GENERAL HINTS.

When you are working on any costly or delicate materials, it is well to place a fold or two of soft old damask tablecloth over the lower part of the frame, so that any friction arising from contact with your body may be avoided. Tissue-paper or soft old tablecloth should also be placed over the part on which you are working, so that your hand shall not touch the work.

Always cover up your work when you leave it, even if it be only for half an hour.

In working without a frame, your work may, if it be in rather narrow strips, be pinned to your knee or to a leaded pincushion.

Very thin strips may sometimes be pinned to the top webbing of a frame, and the lower part left loose, allowing the left hand to pass under it.

In working with a frame, you should learn to use both hands at once, — one to thrust the needle downwards, and the other to thrust it up. A delicate sense of touch is required to do this dexterously, and your progress will be slow at first; but, when you get accustomed to this mode of work, you will be quite repaid for the trouble you have taken in acquiring it. Of course it will be necessary for you to use two thimbles, for right and left middle fingers. One very good reason for working with both hands is, that you may always so sit that the light may never cast the shadow of your hand on your work, as you can use the hand under the frame that would otherwise cast a shadow. Another advantage is, that by changing the position of the body, and bringing different muscles into play, you can work longer without being fatigued.

It is very false economy to go on working with a thread that shows signs of being worn, soiled, or distressed in any way. It is not wasteful to cut it off, and throw it away; for it would spoil the appearance of your work, which should look, as the popular phrase has it, “as if hands had not touched it.”

You must *never pick out* when you are working on silk or velvet. Crash or coarse linen will not be any the worse for unpicking. You must insert the sharp point of your scissors under the stitches, and cut through them in all directions, then pull out from the back of the stuff. Even after you have picked as cleanly as possible, there will still

remain a film of color caused by the slender filaments remaining in the web. This you may get rid of by brushing once or twice with a clean, small clothes-brush.

When it is necessary to secure the fastenings-off and the ends of the threads, a coating of thick paste or gum should be passed over the back of the work.

When your design is all filled in, your work, unless you are a very skilful hand, cannot be considered finished. You must go carefully over it, filling up the bare spots and thin places, here drawing a stitch tighter, there making one looser. The surfaces should have the smooth, rich, even effect of velvet; and the trouble taken to secure this end is as little thrown away as are the "finishing touches" a painter gives his picture. Any one who really loves her work will take a peculiar pleasure in thus completing it, and making every portion as perfect as it is possible for it to be.

Do not forget the directions on p. 33 for the careful use of paste in appliqué work. The outline should be already drawn on the foundation; so that the figure cut out can be placed in exactly the right position, and it should be done with great care and neatness.

CHAPTER V.

COLOR AND DESIGN IN ORNAMENTAL NEEDLEWORK.

“We see in needlework and embroidery, that it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground.” — BACON.

I. — COLOR.

IT has been asserted, we do not presume to say with how much of justice, that the English school of painting is remarkable for fine color. A cynic might be disposed to say that it is a pity a national characteristic so valuable should be displayed only on canvases, be shut up in studios and galleries, be revealed only to a few, whilst in daily life, in our dwellings and in our dresses, it is conspicuous chiefly by its absence. And we are disposed to agree with the cynic. We are not, however, inclined to think that this deficiency arises from a natural depravity of taste inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race, but rather from sheer stupidity, laziness, carelessness, and indifference. It is supposed that every woman is fond of dress, and it is charged upon us that women are extravagantly fond of it. Yet but few women know how to dress becomingly. Many a woman is aware of this defect, and strives to gain instruction how she may correct it. She believes what she is told, and, above all, what she sees in print. For instance, a girl with a sallow skin, pale eyes, and neutral-tinted hair, reads in a book that blue is becom-

ing to fair complexions. It is, indeed, a tradition, an accepted canon of good taste, that blues and blondes are justly formed to meet by nature. So straightway she goes and clothes herself in blue, generally with the most disastrous result. She does not observe that the blue reflected tones intensify the leaden grays in the shadows of the carnations, and neutralize their rosy tints; and she wears the hideous garment with the placid contentment of ignorance.

It is impossible to lay down rules and laws for every color in embroidery: the shades and tones of color are so numerous and so varied that description is of little use, and prescription of none at all.

In painting, the artist can produce or alter colors to an unlimited extent by mixing his pigments or glazing one over another; but the embroiderer's colors are fixed, and the only way in which he can subdue and change them is by juxtaposition and proportion.

We can no more define a color in words than we can define a curve or the *timbre* of a musical sound. Nor can we precisely order color, and scientifically distribute its proportions. Study, by all means, whatever works on color you can obtain; but in practice you must be guided chiefly by your eye and your good taste. If your eye, however, be deficient, no theories nor science in the world will help you. You may, of course, improve your taste by the study of fine color; but if you have not a normal eye,—if, for instance, cool crimson looks to you much the same as hot orange,—you can scarcely be expected to turn out a piece of work agreeable to the majority of your fellow-creatures. Unfortunately few people are aware of their deficiencies in this respect: a scheme of color looks rich and harmonious to them, and they cannot understand why to others it should appear bad.

A great authority on color says, that, to be harmonious, primaries of equal intensity must exist in the proportions of three yellow, five red, and eight blue — integrally sixteen ; the secondaries in the proportions of eight orange, thirteen purple, eleven green — integrally thirty-two ; the tertiaries, citrine (compound of orange and green) nineteen, russet (orange and purple) twenty-one, olive (green and purple) twenty-four — integrally sixty-four. It follows, therefore, that each secondary, being a compound of two primaries, is neutralized by the remaining primary in the same proportions, — thus eight of orange by eight of blue, eleven of green by five of red, thirteen of purple by three of yellow. The tertiaries are neutralized by the secondaries in the same proportion. Of course the above propositions suppose the colors to be used in their prismatic intensities ; but as hundreds, we may rather say thousands, of shades and tones are in daily use in dress and decoration, we must, after all, fall back upon ourselves, our individual tastes, and our experience. Experience tells us that blue is a cold, hard, disagreeable color, and when used in combination it should be employed in a very small proportion. The great artists teach us this both by precept and example. Sir Joshua Reynolds says a great mass of pure blue in a picture is destruction to its harmony. Gainsborough set himself to work to refute this theory in the famous portrait known as the "Blue Boy," but he only confirmed it. His blues are so broken and changed by reflections and shadows, and so surrounded by the yellows and browns of the background, that it is evident that he has only evaded the difficulty, not overcome it.¹ The late Mr. Owen Jones, a scientific colorist and a

¹ The book on Greek Ornament, published by Tilton & Co., gives admirable hints of color.

true artist, tells us, that, in the great Exhibition of 1851, he used the primitive colors, in the proportions stated above, for the decoration of the girders of the roof, and with the happiest result so long as the light was tempered by the canvas covering. When, however, this was removed, the strong daylight completely extinguished the red and yellow, and the third primary alone could be seen. The aerial effect was entirely lost; and, as it became impossible to distinguish one girder from another, the nave appeared to be shortened by one or two hundred feet.

It is tolerably clear, therefore, that if in a piece of embroidery, considered only with reference to itself, we use blue in the large proportion indicated in the foregoing proposition, we shall not do well.

Color in embroidery, however, depends upon so many conditions, that the most general advice only can be given. We may tell the worker that crewel used on "crash" may be used in much more vivid tints than upon fine white linen. The neutral color of "crash," and the broken grays induced by the roughness of its surface, tend to harmonize what may be placed upon it. Mixed and broken tints will look better on the white. A piece of embroidery for an anti-macassar that is intended to light up a dark corner, may consist of bright colors and strong contrasts, while one that is full in the light should be more neutral-tinted. A piece of embroidery may be used for the purpose of gathering up, as it were, of focussing, the color of the surrounding decorations, by repeating them in fainter and brighter, or darker and brighter, tones. For instance, in a room of which the prevailing color is deep crimson, a chair or table-cover or anti-macassar may be placed *en evidence* worked in pale crimson, and the effect heightened by a little pink of the same tone.

To return, however, to our primaries and secondaries. Yellow is the color the most akin to light, and red stands about midway between yellow and blue in this respect. Where you want warmth and light, there it is well to make your prevailing color yellow.¹

Each primary, as is well known, has a complementary color, composed of the other two primaries: thus green is the complementary of red, purple of yellow, and orange of blue. A primary and its complementary form a full and harmonious contrast. The primaries, indeed, reflect their complementaries in a certain proportion; as, in acoustics, when a fundamental note is sounded, its harmonics sound also. The primaries, however well proportioned in quantity and intensity, do not produce an harmonious effect: yet if the contrasts are multiplied by being repeated in small quantities, the relative proportions being observed, black and white being added, and distance and light helping to blend the component colors, a very agreeable result may be produced. The Egyptians, in the decoration of their temples, made use of this system of color.

Brilliancy does not by any means depend on the primitive colors, which, if not well proportioned, will appear dull and heavy, as well as gaudy and discordant, while the dull and heavy tertiaries may, on the other hand, if well arranged, produce an effect almost brilliant.

Always remember that when a primary is tinged with another primary, and contrasted with a secondary, the secondary must have a tinge of the third primary. For instance: simple red may be used with pure green; but scarlet, which is red tinged with yellow, must have a blue

¹ Ruskin is of opinion that the first approach to viciousness of color in any master is indicated by a prevalence of purple and an absence of yellow; that yellow in Nature is more generally contrasted with black than purple, and that this contrast has been employed with success by Turner and Rubens.

green ; and crimson, or red tinged with blue, must have a yellow green.

Always remember, too, that colors on a light ground appear darker, and, on a dark ground lighter.

Colors placed in juxtaposition re-act upon one another, and acquire each a tinge of the other. Neutral colors reflect the complementaries of colors on which they are placed. Neutral gray, for example, on an orange ground, acquires a tinge of blue; of which orange is the complementary color. On a green ground, the gray becomes reddish ; on yellow ground, violet ; on a blue ground, orange ; while a neutral ground has a very subduing and harmonizing effect on the colors placed on it.

If you are in doubt as to any colors harmonizing, it is a good plan to make a rough sketch on paper in the same colors as the material you wish to use. If this sketch does not satisfy you, try some other scheme of color. It is difficult to copy colored designs in worsted or silk, as you often cannot get shades to match : it is therefore better to work from uncolored designs, and experiment in color in the way we recommend.

Light and shade should never appear in embroidery, except in pieces that are to be looked at as pictures, which is not the legitimate use of embroidery. In dress and decoration, textile fabrics necessarily change position and light ; so that sometimes, if light and shade were used, the real light would fall on the part represented in shadow, and the high lights of the work would fall into the shade, and the relation of one to the other be falsified. Study specimens of embroidery whenever you can, and endeavor to ascertain the principle upon which they have been executed. It may not be amiss to describe here one or two, although, as we have observed above, we can never convey an exact

idea of color in words. Some old Spanish embroidered decorations of a room were sold in London a short time ago. They were of red satin, and the pattern was of yellow satin appliqué on the red. This sounds gaudy enough in words: in fact, however, the relative quantities were nicely proportioned, and the two colors of shades that met agreeably were harmonized by a white cord that bordered the yellow satin appliqué. This cord was sewn on principally with white sewing-silk: here and there, however, pea-green silk was introduced, and blue in a very minute proportion. The whole effect was rich and pleasant.

A fragment of embroidery, date about 1750, gives an admirable subject for study. It is the edge of a petticoat, about eight inches deep, and is of white satin. The material is ravelled out in a fringe at the bottom; then comes a line, about an eighth of an inch wide, in dark red floss, then a row of disks shaded in a dark and a light green; above these, and touching one another, are two broader lines of red, one the same color as the first, the other paler; then we have a representation of moss worked in chenille of three shades of green, and from this mossy ground spring roses, carnations, forget-me-nots, and leafy sprays. This part is treated quite decoratively; and no attempt is made to preserve the natural proportions of the flowers in relation to each other, or to their stems and leaves. In the sprays one or two leaves are of peach-blossom color. Above this row of flowers are branches in festoons, of which the stems are olive-brown, the leaves shaded, or rather, we should say, party-colored, with peach-blossom inclining to pink, olive-brown, and two or three shades of green. It will be seen that nature is no more strictly adhered to in color than in form. Above these branches is a pattern in two shades of peach-blossom,

accompanied with a very little blue. Except the moss, the embroidery is all done in floss silk split very fine. Seen by candle-light this beautiful piece of work has the brilliance of cut and polished gems, while the general effect of color is extremely rich and sweet, and would harmonize with almost any surroundings. A pair of mittens of a few years later are of tasteful workmanship: they are of soft open-woven white silk, and are worked principally in floss silk split. There is a scroll of dark green, within and around which are worked roses and green leaves. The roses are worked in embroidery-silk, and are considerably raised: there are four altogether, two red, one pink, and one yellow. Springing from the scroll are ornaments in blue, orange, and violet, all these colors, however, in very small proportion: the stalks and veins are of fine gold-thread, which also forms an outline round the scrolls and two sprays of round red berries that spring from the top of the scroll. The color is really beautiful, and is further harmonized by the gray tint produced by shadows in the open-work of the foundation.

When working in crewels we would advise the worker to calculate carefully how much of each color she will require, and to get it all at once, for the dyes seldom repeat themselves in exactly the same intensity, and thus matching becomes difficult. In crewels, the only color that can be depended upon with absolute certainty is the military scarlet. The number of shades and tones in crewels to be found in England is enormous, one house of business alone keeping one hundred and thirty-three shades of green in stock; other houses keep, perhaps, as many; and, being served by different dyers, the colors are by no means the same. It is to be hoped, that, as the art of embroidery is more generally cultivated here, that one

can more easily obtain these varieties of shades. It is a good plan, when copying a flower, to take a blossom to the crewel-shop, and match its color as nearly as possible: often this may be done exactly. The shades of crimson, ranging from nearly black to nearly white, are sweeter and cooler in crewels than in any other material; the scarlets, which are almost as numerous, are brighter and purer; while the deliciousness of certain blue greens cannot be surpassed. The reader is implored to avoid the harsh magenta reds, and the cold, hard violets and mauves, of the aniline dyes, so common a few years ago. In the best warehouses, however, these vicious tints are not to be found.

II. — DESIGN.

In a book on needlework written about fifty years ago, it is asserted that embroidery on stuffs in long-stitch should not be attempted except by persons who are well practised in drawing, the less accomplished women being recommended to keep to canvas-work and Berlin wool. It would seem that very few draughtswomen existed in those days; for, while minute instructions are given for wool-work, embroidery is quite passed over. We cannot, however, agree with the writer, that if people cannot draw neither shall they embroider, though certainly a knowledge of the principles of design, and some skill in drawing, are of immense advantage. We recommend, therefore, that the practice of drawing and of needlework should go hand in hand. Ornamental designs and outlines of natural flowers may be copied, and at the same time the worker should endeavor to make drawings from natural leaves and flowers. The leaves of the azalea afford an easy and simple outline. The worker may soon attempt a design

for a kettle-holder or a mat from a sprig of this plant. She must not represent the leaves foreshortened or in perspective, but place them flatly on her paper, and endeavor to keep the curves graceful and the masses as well balanced as possible. This balance of masses and lines is what is technically called "composition," and is the most important element of design. There are some works on free-hand, that the embroideress would find useful in her endeavors to improve herself in design drawing. The South-Kensington handbooks, and Plant Forms by F. E. Hulme, and Dresser's Principles of Decorative Design, are within the reach of any student in our public libraries, and would be of help in suggestions of form and color.

As every embroideress will occasionally require to adapt designs and patterns, we may here give a few hints as to how to do so; observing, however, that it by no means comes within the scope of our present intention to give instructions in *drawing*. You have, we will say, a drawing of a branch of orange-tree which you wish to utilize for an anti-macassar, but you cannot tell whether it will compose well in the space you have at command. Take a piece of paper the size of the portion of stuff you wish to cover, and divide it by lines into four equal parts. Sketch roughly in charcoal the branch of orange; it is probably copied from nature, and you find that the masses of form only fill up two squares, while one is barely touched and the other empty. Alter the inclination of the stalk, add more fruit or leaves or twigs on the one hand, and take them away on the other; when you have done your very best, faint off the charcoal with a handkerchief, and go over the outline with chalk or pencil. If a square obstinately remain empty, you may touch in a butterfly or a bird. Very small objects, if discreetly placed, will fill

up large spaces. A careful observation of the common Japanese screens will be very useful in this direction. The artful way in which the Japanese will cover a large surface with the fewest possible touches is surprising, and we cannot do better than take lessons from them. Economy in design is not *our* strong point: we are sadly given to overloading, or else we fall into the opposite extreme of meagreness, which is perhaps even a worse fault.

Designs may be enlarged or reduced by means of a proportional compass. It is, however, not very safe to alter the size of a design, as what looks well enough in a large pattern is not always suitable for a small one, and *vice versa*.

Do not mix the style of one epoch or nationality with another. It may be seen both in specimens of ancient embroideries and in representations of it in paintings, that the patterns used in needlework were, allowing for the technical differences of the art, similar to those used for glass and wall painting, and manuscript illumination. We have no distinctive nineteenth-century style, and too often we make an unmeaning jumble; but we should as far as possible assimilate our needlework to the style of the room we wish to decorate.

In conclusion, we should like to warn our readers against the extremes into which fashion loves to lead us. Just now there is a mania for what is called *art-needlework*, of which some of the manifestations are any thing but artistic. In illustration of the danger into which the embroiderer may fall, we give the description of two articles which we have lately been distressed by seeing. One of these was an anti-macassar worked on crash, and presented at its lower end three dandelions all in a row, — pre-Raphaelite dandelions, stiff and bolt upright, all exactly

alike and all hideous. The other piece of work, intended for a mantlepiece valance, was also on crash, — a poinsettia was depicted springing out of nothing, and sticking out its leaves stiffly enough. There were no sweet and flowing curves : all was angularity and jerkiness. This frightful plant was repeated *five* times without any variation. These two hideous specimens were bought and sold under the name of art-embroidery !



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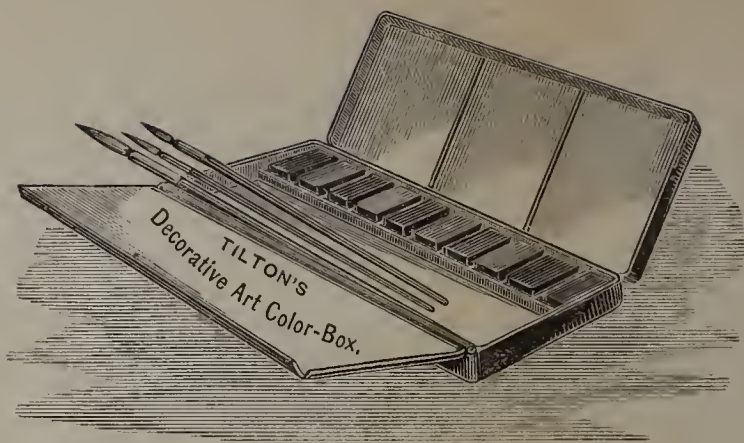
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